



Wyalkatchem Local Emergency Management Committee

MINUTES

Date 7 February 2024

Location Shire Chambers

Time 5.00pm

Videoconference link: Meeting ID: 439 481 732 769

Passcode: s7Y8CC

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39. *Functions of local emergency management committees*
- (a) *to advise and assist the local government in ensuring that local emergency management arrangements are established for its district.*
 - (b) *to liaise with public authorities and persons in the development, review and testing of local emergency management arrangements; and*
 - (c) *to carry out other emergency management activities as direct by the SEMC or prescribed by the regulations.*

1. **Opening and Welcome**

Shire President Owen Garner, opened the meeting at 5.03pm.

2. **Attendance and Apologies**

Attendance

Owen Garner	LEMC Chairperson and Shire President
Stephen Tindale	Chief Executive Officer
Stephanie Elvidge	Governance Executive Officer
Terry Delane	Manager of Works
Mark Shover	Department of Communities – TEAMS
Michael Phillips	Department of Communities – TEAMS
Tracey Dickson	St John Ambulance Vice Chairperson and Shire Councillor
Pauline Wray	WDHS Principle
Yvette Grigg	District Emergency Management Advisor
Jay Hammond	St John Ambulance Chairperson
Trent Tyler	CBFCO, Bush Fire Brigade Wyalkatchem and Districts

Emma Holdsworth	Captain, Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service
Cathy Carter	Commonwealth Home Support Program
Deb Andrews	Wyalkatchem Police Department
Kelsi Wells	DFES – Area Officer Upper Wheatbelt
Fiona Williams	Wyalkatchem Koorda Health Services
Chad Rose	Western Power - TEAMS

Visitors

Cr Mischa Stratford	
Cr Justin Begley	
Cr Rod Lawson Kerr	
Cr Christopher Loton	
Cr Christy Petchell	Shire Deputy President
Dennis Pease	Shire Airport Maintenance
Craig Cooper	

Apologies

Yvette Grigg	District Emergency Management Advisor – Retired
Cliff Simpson	WALGA Roadwise – Retired
Dennis Reid	DBFCO Yorkrakine Bush Fire Brigade (Proxy for Trent Tyler– CBFCO)- No response
Laurent Marsol	Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions
Maxi McDonald	Community Paramedic
Nikki Hauser	Community Resource Centre
Paul Casey	Western Power
Marcus O'Reilly	DBFCO Nalkain Bush Fire Brigade (Proxy for Trent Tyler– CBFCO)
Jo Spadaccini	Department of Communities – TEAMS
Erin Holdsworth	Wyalkatchem Medical Centre

4. Discussion of recent events and how we can be better prepared into the future.

Members to consider:

- *log of issues faced*
- *what worked/ didn't work*
- *how can we mitigate*
- *Positives*

Kelsi – DFES

Thank you to the Community, Services and Western Power on managing the outage so well.

Northam had power though DFES servers are located in Kalgoorlie which was problematic. Communications had back up and so were ok.

Water corporation were very responsive re water issues. DFES also ran satellite phones which were provided to the Wyalkatchem VFRS. There were some issues with those stations that had electric doors and fuel supply.

Emma – Wyalkatchem VFRS Captain

Communications were a huge issue. There was support from DFES and received a satellite phone on the Wednesday. Although vehicles were on triple charges, there were still issues with batteries going flat.

The Wyalkatchem Fire Station has manual back up to the electric roller door, it was just very slow.

Jay – St John

There was an incident in Koorda and they were unable to contact 000 and so had to drive themselves to the Wyalkatchem Hospital where they were then transported to Perth.

When the town network is down, St John doesn't have any communications at all. Jay was able to speak to their manager everyday when he found a place with reception out at Cowcoving Bin. Volunteers door knocked and checked in with members of the community. Jay has since sent an email to St John Regional Manager regarding sourcing generators, accommodation and Starlink internet. The Ambulance doors were an issue as they didn't have a manual override.

Jay was in regular contact with Sgt Deb.

Thank you to Dawn for all her meal making and home deliveries and to all the other volunteers in the community and Dennis for checking in on the airport.

Jay would like a new or revised vulnerable people list to be created and shared with all heads of departments.

Cathy – CHSP

Communications were an issue as they deliver meals, social support, transport support etc. to 25 clients. They also door knocked from Wyalkatchem to Koorda.

Deb – Police

No phones, Radios were ok. Didn't have a generator – they do now. Deb was in constant contact with Northam, Western Power etc. for updates.

A caravan was delivered to the station which had a generator, communications and access to information and air-conditioning. Deb will follow up in future within 48hrs to get the Caravan in place.

Deb used the Shires list of vulnerable people that was developed during COVID and knocked on all doors with cold water, reassurance etc. Some further people have been added to the list

Western Power worked incredibly hard to resolve the situation.

Glen - Water corporation

Water Corp used Sat phones so their communications weren't impacted. He travels from Kalannie to Hyden and so Communications and no power is still difficult. Most of the Water plants are gravity fed but there are those that require power.

Water corp will be meeting for a debrief and discussing key locations for equipment.

Pauline – Wylie School Principle

As it was school holidays all was ok. Air-conditioning could be an issue and when the phones are out, there are no alternative communication sources. The school will be lobbying for Sat phones.

Fiona – Hospital

The generator activates automatically as soon as they go into emergency mode and they were able to get by with walkie talkies and Sat phones.

Starlink was supplied to enable internet access

The hospital hadn't been advised of the GP leaving town and so there were delays in setting up alternatives. Telehealth was difficult as the communications were affected.

Admissions were made – mostly dehydration and oxygen related and Health support was brought in from Northam to support the hospital.

The hospital is conducting an internal review of their emergency response management – the wellbeing of staff was noted to have been overlooked – 3 houses are off site without generators, food and water.

Welfare checks on families and friends of staff flagged additional people further out of town. There was an increase on meals on wheels and 3-4 trips made/ day. Menus were adjusted to not require heating or refrigerating.

The hospital welcomed the public to come and charge their phones. The generator ran out of fuel for about 3 hrs (it ran out earlier than 36hrs, possibly due to some neighbours plugging extension cords into it) and it was realized that there was no back up fuel on site and Dunning's was not on time. The hospital now has 3 drums on site and a manual pump.

The emergency phone worked on 3g at the school.

In summary there was great morale, team work, and meeting up with Community members. It was fortunate that there were no emergencies requiring transport.

Trent – VBFB Captain

There were several lightning strikes and trees on the roads requiring loaders to push up the branches.

Telstra had dropped out immediately. Trent had Starlink and could contact Northam but was unable to get reception to a near neighbour.

Trent is looking into the funding available for Generator Sets to provide relief for the Community.

The Community Club hooked up a Generator and invited members of the community to come to a cool place with refreshments.

Terry – Shire Manager of Works

Feels we underestimated the ferocity and spread of the storm which resulted in being stretched too thin attempting to clear and reopen the roads.

West Yorkrookine was very bad but retained communications. Lack of Wyalkatchem communications were the most impactful.

Western Powers regular alerts providing positive power updates created a slower response than would otherwise have been taken EG welfare checks began 4 days after the event. Terry and his crew checked on the Senior Cits and CEACA units' residents.

There was no fuel in Wyalkatchem – staff having to drive to Goomalling and Cunderdin to keep vehicles, generators and pumps working. An enormous amount of staff time and energy was also spent keeping the oval alive.

The Shire generator was also out of action for 3 days creating major disruption.

Recommends planning for similar power and communication outages – some people were affected for 9 days.

Chad Rose – Western Power

There was wide spread damage to the Power network, Wyalkatchem was the worst. Staff had to patrol every power line to ensure they were safe prior to gaining permission from head office to re activate. This contributed to the delays.

Staff are only permitted to work 14hr days and manpower was also affected by 45 people and infrastructure being redirected to Wongan - Ballidu and Koorda fires.

Western Power also had communication issues, especially in Koorda where they could only use 2-ways to 1 person at a time and each conversation had to then be relayed to HQ.

It was not an easy time for the crews and they worked incredibly hard.

Michael Shover – Department of Communities

Michael introduced himself as he has only been in the role for 3 days. He commented that the issues brought up at the meeting were very similar to other Shires.

Michael will approach his senior manager a request for sat phones for all departments to be provided.

Dennis Pease – Shire of Wyalkatchem and ex communications

Dennis advised that the Telstra Tower is the key and supports the need for a backup generator. The tower connects to the exchange in town by optic fiber cables. When the exchange generator ran out of fuel, it affected the tower. The generator lasts for 2 days and so Telstra should have known it would need refueling. Eventually a battery was supplied by Telstra that came from Albany.

Dennis passed on his compliments to Western Power for all of their support and hard work rectifying the power.

Stephen Tindale, Acting CEO

CEO advised that NBN is due to visit Wyalkatchem in the near future. NBN is also power driven.

The reason that the dam and oval water corp pump didn't work was because it was on a spur line which are left until last to be addressed.

Sargent Deb was commended for her welfare checks and proactive thinking.

Thank you to others that supplied goods and services such as Glen at the Pharmacy.

Craig Cooper – CRC

The CRC could have solar power on installation of batteries.

Cr Stratford – Senior Citizens delegate

The Senior Citizens Trust will be investigating the possibility of linking each unit to a 15amp generator to run the essentials.

Sid – General Store

Sid is disappointed that he has not been repaid for the credit he gave community members for their purchases.

Sid also had issues with the shop generator and lost several fridges and other appliances.

5. Action Planning

- Revise Vulnerable People list – merge Shire and Police and other stakeholders’ knowledge.
- Sat phones for each Stakeholder to be procured
- Manual overrides for all electric doors
- Generators – Rec Centre and other +15amp – Trent Tyler to give Stephanie the information.
- Response tomes to be 48hrs regardless of Text updates.

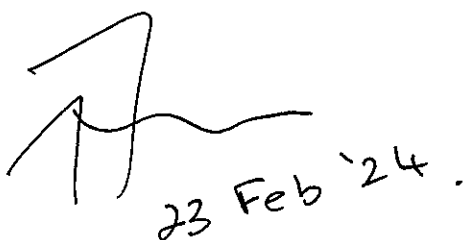
- CEO will follow up with Western Power if they would consider a local electrical as a competent person to access the compound and if they would permit a Generator to be placed outside of the compound that also connects to the tower in order for the Shire to act.
- Increase the coordinating of agencies in order to share the load and support the community more effectively
- Update section 8 of the LEMA including plant and communications
- Develop a protocol for a Major storm event and supply interruption within the LEMA
- Investigate a connection from the main power line for the oval and Dam rather than a spur.
- Ensure all vehicles have access to switch over fuel pumps – e.g. the VFES has a 25,000 L emergency switch over pump.
- NEWROC to address issues with Telstra
- People to be encourages to have emergency cash at home for accessing fuel from the roadhouse and food from the General Store.
- General Store to assess their generator as being adequate to run the shop.

6. Next Meetings

Date	Activity	Venue	Comment
6 March	Updates + planning	Chambers	5pm
	Impact Statement		

7. Meeting Closure

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and having such a productive meeting and closed the LEMC meeting at 6.33pm.



Handwritten signature and date: 23 Feb '24.